

**MINUTES OF HISTORICAL ADVISORY BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING OF THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2008
CONFERENCE ROOM 360, CITY HALL
2263 SANTA CLARA AVENUE – 7:00 PM**

CONVENE: 7:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Acting Chair Miller, Board Members Irons, Lynch
and Owens

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Jon Biggs, Planning Services Manager/Secretary
to the Historical Advisory Board; Tony Ebster,
Permit Technician I/Recording Secretary

MINUTES:

Minutes from the meeting of September 4, 2008

Minutes from the meeting of October 2, 2008

Motion (Lynch)/Second (Irons) to accept the minutes with corrections

Ayes: 4; Noes: 0

Motion Carries

AGENDA CHANGES AND DISCUSSIONS:

None

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

None

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION:

None

REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS:

(7-A.) 2009 Meeting Calendar

Mr. Jon Biggs presented the staff report. He clarified that the meeting of January 1, 2009 needs to be scheduled for a different day due to the New Years Day holiday.

Motion (Lynch)/Second (Miller) to accept the 2009 Historical Advisory Board Meeting Calendar

Ayes: 4; Noes: 0

Motion Passes

(7-B.) PLN08-0211 – 2413 Buena Vista Avenue. The Applicant requests approval to remove the structure located at 2413 Buena Vista Avenue from the Alameda Historical Building Study List.

Mr. Jon Biggs presented the staff report. He pointed out several aspects of the property and how things have changed over time including alterations to the structure, lack of maintenance, changes in the surrounding properties, and uses of the area as a business district.

Acting Chair Miller asked if the project would have to come back before the Board for a Certificate of Approval for demolition if the structure is taken off the Historical Building Study List.

Board Member Lynch asked what sections of the Municipal Code regulated Certificates of Approval.

Board Member Irons asked why buildings must come before the Board if they are not on the list.

Board Member Lynch pointed out that the pre-1942 requirement was changed due to a project that was to be demolished and because of public response. City Council amended the ordinance to require that any structure built prior to 1942 must go before the Historical Advisory Board for a Certificate of Approval.

Ms. Cara Bertron of Page and Turnbull, Historic Preservation Consultant, was available to answer questions of the Board.

Mr. Miller asked about the criteria used to create the report that says the house is not a valuable historic resource.

Mr. Owens asked for clarification about some of the terminology used in the report to describe the house.

Ms. Bertron replied by saying that the terminology she used was in the guidelines.

Mr. Owens asked if the evaluation was compared to the National Park rating system or the City's guidelines.

Ms. Bertron said that the evaluation was compared to both the City's guidelines and the National Park rating system.

Acting Chair Miller pointed out that because the architect or designer is unknown, that is not a valid reason to remove the structure from the study list.

Public comment was opened

Ms. Betsy Matheson gave a short presentation on the possibilities of restoration. She made comparisons to a house she and her husband purchased and restored in San Jose and the structure at 2413 Buena Vista Avenue, noting it could be restored if desired. She also showed some pictures that illustrate the context of the neighborhood.

Mr. Woody Minor helped clarify what had happened in the neighborhood that the project structure is located in. He provided information regarding the character of the neighborhood and how the structure at 2413 Buena Vista is an integral part of keeping the character of the neighborhood intact. He disagreed with the consultant's report on how the 'setting' of the neighborhood is defined. He expressed concern with setting a precedent by removing the structure from the study list.

Mr. Richard Rutter addressed the Board and stated he wants to see the structure kept on the study list. He expressed concern that the building was looked at from a standpoint of modern construction regarding the structural integrity and should have been looked at from the perspective of being an older, historic structure.

Ms. Debbie George addressed the Board. She spoke to the North of Lincoln revitalization project and the Cavanaugh building. She supports removing the structure from the study list and would like to see the project move forward. She suggested moving the house or selling pieces from the house to be used in the preservation of other houses.

Ms. Valerie Turpen addressed the Board. She also submitted some pictures that show the streetscape. The pictures showed how the neighborhood would look if the structure was moved to the parking lot to the Southeast of 2413 Buena Vista. She feels that the whole block is an important part of Alameda. She is worried that if the structure is removed from the study list, it will be demolished.

Mr. Ross Dileau addressed the Board. He talked about the restoration he has done to his own house and that complete restoration of the subject structure is possible. He wants to see the structure at 2413 Buena Vista restored and preserved. He addressed points in the Page and Turnbull report regarding the importance of the architect and stated it doesn't matter that the architect is unknown, the structure is still important. He feels that the criteria used are not what should be used to determine whether or not the structure is historically significant. He supports keeping the structure on the list.

Mr. Christopher Buckley addressed the Board. He reminded the Board of the letter from the Alameda Architectural Preservation Society (AAPS) that was sent to the Board and the Planning Department regarding the Page and Turnbull report. He discussed options for the house such as moving it to a different location. He also talked about the number of parking spaces and what is going to be required in the future. He would like clarification of the ordinance by the City Attorney regarding the need for a Certificate of Approval. He also feels that the criteria used to generate the Page and Turnbull report is not correct.

Mr. Kevin Fredrick addressed the Board. He wants to see the structure stay on the study list and urged the Board to deny any proposed demolition. He supports moving the house to a different location.

Ms. Barbara Price was available to answer any questions.

Board Member Lynch asked about efforts to move the house.

Ms. Price replied by saying that after further evaluation of the structure, it was not economically feasible to restore the house for use in the new development and the owner is looking to give the house away for relocation. Other options are to use parts of the house for the restoration of other houses.

Acting Chair Miller asked if the house is taken off the list if it will still have to come before the Board if it is to be relocated.

Mr. Biggs clarified that if the building is on the list, a request for relocation will have to come back to the Board.

Board Member Irons asked about the Cavanaugh project and what it entails. He also wanted clarification of the uses of the buildings in the area. He talked about some of the houses in his neighborhood and made some comparisons to those and the structure at 2413 Buena Vista and also expressed appreciation for the woodwork inside the building. He is concerned that the house will deteriorate further if it continues to be neglected. He also expressed concern with the Page and Turnbull report.

Board Member Owens pointed out that despite the requirements of modern commercial structures, the historic building code could be applied to the project structure.

Mr. Minor asked if the owner's intention was to keep the structure upon purchase or to demolish it.

Ms. Price replied by saying that the owner intended to incorporate the structure into the new project but once the evaluation was complete, it would not be economically feasible to restore and reuse the structure.

Board Member Owens pointed out that the issue before the Board was whether or not to remove the structure from the list. They were not deciding on the future use of the structure.

The Board expressed concern that if the request for removal from the study list is denied, it could be appealed to City Council. They are concerned that if City Council were to overturn the denial, the Board would not see the project again and the house would be lost.

Board Member Irons would like a continuance until clarification is given as to whether or not a Certificate of Approval would have to come before the Board if taken off the study list.

Mr. Biggs said that upon interpretation of the ordinance by the City Attorney, the Board may still see the project if it were to be relocated or demolished.

Board Member Lynch would like to see a good faith effort to give the house away to someone who would have it relocated and preserved. The developer has said he is sincerely interested in finding a new owner and a new home for the building.

Board Member Lynch motioned to continue the matter until the March 2009 HAB meeting so they have a period of 90 days to show good faith effort in the terms of the Oakland ordinance. All these efforts would continue for at least 90 days. Each would include the statement that such listing was required by the City of Alameda and would include both a phone number and an email address of someone in the Planning Department who would keep track of any inquiries and answer questions. Such efforts would include:

1. Posting availability signs on the front sized at least 3' x 6' in a large and legible font.
2. Placing advertisements in Bay Area print and broadcast media as well as websites. This kind of story could bring positive publicity to the developers and secure good will for the new project.
3. Enlisting the Bay Area, State and national historic preservation communities by sending releases they can run in their newsletters and on their websites and asking them to email the availability of this building to their membership, with the understanding that the structure would remain on the Island.
4. Planning staff to maintain a log of all inquiries and their disposition, document the maintenance of the structure through periodic photographs and make such documentation available at all HAB meetings between December and March so we can track the progress of the preservation efforts
5. Preventing further depredation of the building by weatherproofing the place, sealing off the fence and eliminating the use of the property for parking, plus a good faith effort at security to safeguard the historic resource
6. The Craigslist posting stated that the owners would offer \$5,000 to someone willing to move the structure. If that offer still stands, include it in all listings, postings, and newspaper stories.

This motion failed for lack of a second.

Board Member Irons stated he would be concerned with any motion that is too open-ended.

Board Member Owens asked about the categories and if the pre-1942 category overlaps with the study list category or if they are separate.

There was consensus among Board Members that an opinion from the City Attorney regarding the need for a Certificate of Approval if removed from the list would be helpful in their consideration of the request.

Motion (Lynch)/Second (Owens) to continue the item to December 4, 2008

Ayes: 4; Noes 0

Motion Passes

BOARD COMMUNICATIONS:

Board Member Lynch reminded the Board of the upcoming 2009 Historic Preservation Season.

STAFF COMMUNICATIONS:

Mr. Biggs updated the Board on the Del Monte Project.

ADJOURNMENT: 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Jon Biggs

Planning Services Manager/Secretary, Historical Advisory Board